

Minutes

Talbot County Board of Elections
215 Bay Street
Easton, MD 21601
July 14, 2016

Present:

Board

Joseph H. Secrist, President	(R)
Walter W. Black	(D)
Richard B. Bulman	(R)
Susan MacKinnon	(D)
John F. Hall	(R)

Staff

Patricia L. Mitchell

State Board of Elections

Sylvia Brown, Director, Personnel Services Division

Public

Walter Johnson	Jane Bailey
Jane Johnson	Judy Wixsted
Eugene Goll	Janet Smith
Mary-beth Goll	Christine Polk, <i>Star-Democrat</i>
Steve Bailey	

The monthly meeting of the Talbot County Board of Elections was held on June 14, 2016, in Conference Room # 1 at the Board office indicated above. Mr. Secrist called the meeting to order at 9: 37 a.m. Mr. Secrist noted that a quorum was present.

Approval of Minutes of June 9, 2016, and June 15, 2016

Mr. Secrist asked if the Board had any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meeting of June 15, 2016, a copy of which had been forwarded to the Board Members by email in advance of the meeting. Mr. Hall noted that he had corrected the date of the meeting to read June 15, 2016, since the draft had been circulated.

Mr. Bulman moved that the minutes be approved as amended; Mr. Hall seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Mr. Bulman moved that the minutes of the open portion of the June 9 meeting be approved as previously circulated; Mr. Hall seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Addition/Changes to the Agenda

Mr. Secrist asked if there were any requests for changes to the agenda. Mr. Bulman requested two additions: (1) policy manual and (2) the goals for the Board. Mr. Secrist asked that the agenda include a review of the use of the warehouse for early voting. Upon motion duly made (Mr. Hall) and seconded (Mr. Bulman), the agenda, as amended, was approved unanimously.

Public Comment

Mr. Secrist asked if the members of the public present wished to make any comments. One attendee requesting that the Board members speak louder so that the public could understand what was being discussed. Ms. Bailey observed that the State Board's webpage stated that someone convicted of a felony would be eligible to register once he or she has completed the court-ordered sentence of imprisonment, including any term of parole or probation for the conviction. She stated that the local board's webpage merely said that one who has been convicted of buying or selling votes would not be eligible to vote. Ms. Mitchell said that she would have a more complete statement added to the Local Board's webpage.

Election Director's Report

Mrs. Mitchell provided her report in writing, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A. She added that the election judges had criticized the use of the totem poles to display required legal notices, and that the State Board was giving consideration to the use of magnetic signs which could be affixed to the black storage carts. She noted that there would be another meeting of the Chief Judges in August.

Attorney's Report

Mr. Cronan was unable to attend the meeting due to the death of his father.

Old Business

Invoices

In response to a question from Mr. Hall, Mr. Secrist stated that he had approved the purchase of "welcome" baskets for the meeting of the Maryland Association of Election Officials.

Mr. Secrist asked Ms. Mitchell to ask Ms. Asche, at the County finance office, whether the County had received a credit from imPRESSive Printing for canceled work.

Budget

No report was available from the County regarding entries made for the fiscal year that had just ended nor for the fiscal year that had just commenced. Ms. Mitchell stated that the County Financial office's delay in providing those reports was customary in July.

Training (Related to MDVoters)

Ms. Mitchell stated that a recent session had reviewed the deadlines for filing a petition for referendum. Ms. Mitchell had provided the deadline of August 15, 2016 to Mr. Pullen, the County attorney.

Election Judges

This subject was partially addressed during the Election Director's report. In addition, Ms. Mitchell noted the need to recruit additional election judges for the General Election, as eight of those who served during the Primary Election had stated that they would not be available for the General Election. Mr. Secrist asked that the Board be provided with a list of any new election judges named, along with the party affiliation of each.

Customer Satisfaction survey

Ms. Mitchell distributed a copy of a completed customer satisfaction survey which praised Ms. Mitchell's performance.

Maryland Association of Election Officials conference

Ms. Mitchell stated that a survey asking for comments would be forthcoming by email. She said that, generally, there had been dissatisfaction with the insufficiency of space for the break-out sessions. Exhibit D regarding the MAEO meeting will be e-mailed to the board at a later date by Ms. Mitchell.

County Bulletins

Mr. Secrist asked if anything were mentioned in the County Bulletin about which this Board should be concerned. Ms. Mitchell stated that there was not.

Use of Public Schools for the General Election

Ms. Mitchell stated that the Board of Education had not altered its position that schools would be open on the day of the General Election. However, at St. Michaels High School voters would be able to use the gymnasium rather than the auditorium.

Mrs. MacKinnon stated that the refusal of the County School Board to close the schools which would serve as polling sites was a disappointing scenario. She noted that, other than the public schools, the County does not have a facility of sufficient size to conduct elections in certain precincts. She reported that she had attended a meeting of the Board of Education to emphasize the need for the schools to be closed on Election Day, but had received no favorable response.

Mr. Black said that the refusal to close the schools due the closure of Easton High School for the Waterfowl festival was placing profit (money to be made by catering to tourists) over principal (fair elections). Discussion ensued regarding the closure of schools in other counties for election, based on local laws requiring such closure.

Mr. Bulman stated that he was in favor of approaching Mr. Corey W. Pack, president of the County Council, bearing in mind that any action by the County Council would not affect the upcoming General Election.

Ms. MacKinnon made a two-part motion: first, that this Board prepare a formal letter to the Superintendent of Schools reiterating the importance of closing schools for the benefit of elections; and second that this Board approach the County Council to ask it to consider adding a provision to the County Code which would require that public schools to be used as a voting site be closed on days elections were conducted. Mr. Bulman seconded. Mr. Secrist suggested that a copy of the letter to the Superintendent be sent to all members of the Board of Education. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Secrist said that he would approach Mr. Pack about making a formal presentation to the Council.

Warehouse

Ms. Mitchell stated that all voting equipment had been removed from the building at 142 North Harrison Street and transferred to a portion of the space leased by the County at the building on the northeast corner of Md. Rte. 322 and Glebe Road, such building being referred to the "Black & Decker plant." However, she had not had time to organize the space.

Mr. Bulman asked Ms. Mitchell of her opinion concerning the suitability of that site for Early Voting during the General Election. Ms. Mitchell indicated that she felt the site was suitable in that there was already a separate office space which could be secured during Early Voting; that it would not be necessary to transfer voting equipment from the storage area to a separate site; that a canopy covered the approach to the building which would offer protection in the event of inclement weather, and that the site had adequate parking spaces. Ms. MacKinnon asked if there were any conflicting uses at the site, to which Ms. Mitchell replied in the negative.

Although it would be necessary to inform voters of the change in the Early Voting location, she could add that information to specimen ballots that are mailed to every county voter.

In response to a question from Ms. MacKinnon, Ms. Mitchell stated that she recommended the use of the site for Early Voting.

New Business

Election Judge Refresher Trainings

Ms. Mitchell stated that the sessions would begin in late August or early September and would continue for the month of September. One matter to be given special emphasis concerned "same day registration."

Policy Manual

Mr. Bulman presented the text of the matters he proposed for inclusion in the policy manual. He said that Mr. Hall had provided him with material for possible inclusion. Mr. Hall said that his materials were, as yet, only in draft form and suggested that he edit them and circulate them in time for all suggestions to be discussed at the next meeting.

Goals of the Board

Mr. Bulman asked Ms. Mitchell to circulate those goals previously agreed upon, so that the Board might review and discuss at the next meeting.

Mr. Secrist suggested that the next Board meeting be begun at 9:30 a.m., rather than at the scheduled time of 7:00 p.m., so as to make it convenient to meet with Ms. Janet Smith, State Election Board, Voter Registration Manager of Audits, to discuss her two most recent reports. Mr. Hall expressed concern about notification to the public. Ms. Mitchell stated that she would add a statement to the webpage. The Board members were in agreement to reschedule the next meeting for 9:30 a.m., and to invite Ms. Smith to attend.

Mr. Secrist further suggested that, after the closed session, the Board should reconvene to visit the warehouse space to consider its suitability for use during Early Voting. The Board members were in agreement to do so.

Ms. MacKinnon moved that the Board enter into closed session to discuss the contents of those two meetings in respect to the Election Director's performance. Mr. Bulman seconded, and the motion carried unanimously. A copy of the Board's written statement for closing a meeting is attached hereto as Exhibit B. The Board entered into closed session at 10:36 a.m.

The Board reconvened at 12:35 p.m. Mr. Secrist announced that no action had been taken during the closed session, but, rather, that all consideration would be deferred until the next meeting, to which this Board would invite Ms. Janet Smith to attend. He further stated

that the next meeting, scheduled for August 17, 2016, would begin at 9:30 a.m., rather than at the scheduled hour of 7:00 p.m. All members of the public left except for Walter Johnson.

The Board, and Mr. Johnson, then proceeded to the Warehouse space, where the facilities were examined for suitability for Early Voting. After doing so, the Board returned to its office and resumed its session. Mr. Bulman moved that this Board utilize its Warehouse space for Early Voting, subject to approval by the State Board of Elections and the County Council. Ms. MacKinnon seconded. Mr. Black asked for clarification of the Board's reason for adopting the motion. Mr. Hall referred to the avoidance of the expense of leasing alternate space should Early Voting be held at the Easton Fire House, the avoidance of friction with the Fire Department over the public's presence interfering with its response to emergencies, and the avoidance of the cost of moving the voting equipment from the Warehouse space to the Fire House.

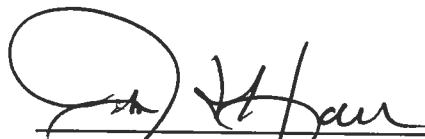
Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 1:25 p.m.

Attested,



Joseph H. Secrist, Chairman

Respectfully submitted,



John F. Hall, recorder

NVSR Update

Meetings are now going to be held on need to basis for now.

Voter Registration

Attached is a copy of the Monthly Statistical Report. I have also attached the Precinct Voter Count Report which is used for the website page. (Exhibits A & B)

Election Judge Trainings

We had our first Chief Judge Lessons Learned meeting on June 22, 2016. I asked that they think of ways to make the General Election better. I have received a lot of ideas from each of them. We talked about how to make things better for the General Election and I gave them some thoughts that I had picked up on at a Lessons Learned meeting in Queen Anne's County on June 16. They were really more focused on how to make the Provisional Ballot Job easier. I explained that this was going to take a few classes and possibly train several people at each polling place and they liked that.

Daily Data Entry

The books are open and we have been busy with the backlog of batches, but we are caught up and usually have 4 to 5 batches a day. I have come up with a plan for both Sabrina and Teresa. Each day they split the batches, Sabrina does the first half and Teresa does the second have. They both take turns going to MVA to pick up the weekly work. They also split the mail that comes each day.

Daily Phone Calls and In-Person Visits

We have received 38 phone calls, 10 in person visits.

Sabrina - 17 calls and helped 3 people at the front window.

Teresa -13 calls and helped 4 people at the front window.

Patti - 8 phone calls and helped 3 person at the front window.

Critical Oversight Report

For the month of June, I audited Caroline County.

ERIC Reports

We received a new ERIC Report and have finished it.

Meetings

I attended a Lessons Learned meeting in Queen Anne County on June 16. This meeting was with the shore counties. There were a lot of good things covered in this meeting. I am going to share them with the Chief Judges on June 20.

We all attended the MAEO meeting in Cambridge (except Joe). I hope everyone enjoyed it. There was a lot to take in, however there were many complaints about the space and how there were not enough tables for all boards to sit at.

Met with Brian Moore on June 30, 2016, we went over to the new warehouse. The County has made an agreement with the company the owns the old Black & Decker plant for temporary storage space. The contract has been signed and we won't have to pay rent but the county will share in the cost of the Utilities. This will be based on how many square feet we use.

WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT

Date: 7-14-14 Time: 10:36 .m. Location: 215 Bay Street, Easton, MD 21601

Motion to close meeting made by: Mr. McKinnon Seconded by Mr. Bulman

Members voting in favor: unanimous

Opposed: _____

Abstaining _____ Absent _____

STATUTORY AUTHORITY TO CLOSE SESSION, General Provisions Article, §3-305(b) (check all that apply):

- (1) To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals; To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter;
- (2) To protect the privacy or reputation of individuals concerning a matter not related to public business;
- (3) – (6) Omitted; not within the authority of a local election board;
- (7) To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter;
- (8) To consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation;
- (9) through (11) Omitted; not within the authority of a local election board;
- (12) To conduct or discuss an investigative proceeding on actual or possible criminal conduct;
- (13) To comply with a specific constitutional, statutory, or judicially imposed requirement that prevents public disclosures about a particular proceeding or matter;

FOR EACH CITATION CHECKED ABOVE, THE REASONS FOR CLOSING AND TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

§3-305(b) (1) Election Director Evaluation
§3-305(b) (1) Master Audit & Original Summary Report
§3-305(b) () _____

This statement is made by Joseph H. Secrist, Presiding Officer:

Joseph H. Secrist
Signature

EXH. B